DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 314 521 UD 027 188

TITLE	Helping the Homeless in Your Community.
INSTITUTION	Homelessness Exchange, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Edison Electric Inst., Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Sep 89
NOTE	68p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Homelessness Information Exchange, 1830 Connecticut Ave., N.W., 4th floor, Washington, DC 20009 ($10.00).
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131) -- Reference Materials - Directories/Catalogs (132)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Citizen Participation; *Community Action; Community Development; Community Involvement; *Community Organizations; Economically Disadvantaged; *Helping Relationship; *Homeless People; *Housing Needs; Information Services; Social Services; Voluntary Agencies; Volunteers

ABSTRACT

This guide for the public provides information on ways to address homelessness within the context of community development. The following articles issued by the Homelessness Information Exchange are included as Sections 1, 2, and 3: (1) "The Problem of Homelessness Nationwide"; (2) "Ways You Can Help the Homeless"; and (3) "Building a Coalition in Your Community." Section 4 contains the following printed materials issued by other organizations about homelessness: (1) "Check List for Action" (the National Mental Health Association); (2) "Policy Priorities: Housing and Homelessness" and "Myths: Housing and Homelessness" (the Campaign to End Hunger and Homelessness); (3) "What Parishes Can Do to Implement the Economic Pastoral" (the U.S. Catholic Conference); (4) "How to Sponsor a Homeless Person or Family" and "Home Kits for Homeless Persons" (the Atlanta Coalition for the Homeless); and (5) "The Homeless: Myths vs. Reality" (the Democratic Study Group). Section 5 includes a list of national and local organizations to contact for further information on hunger and homelessness. Section 6, the Bibliography, contains 15 references. Section 7 contains a list of eight free publications available to the public. Section 8 includes descriptions of, and information on, 11 video tapes on homelessness. Section 9 describes seven publications available from the Homelessness Information Exchange. (JS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED314521

Helping the Homeless in Your Community

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Adelaida Jaquin
Homelessness Exchange

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HOMELESSNESS EXCHANGE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

UD 027 188

Helping The Homeless In Your Community

Homelessness Information Exchange
September 1989

Table of Contents

I. *The Problem of Homelessness Nationwide*
Homelessness Information Exchange

II. *Ways You Can Help the Homeless*
Homelessness Information Exchange

III. *Building a Coalition in Your Community*
Homelessness Information Exchange

IV. Printed Materials:

Check List for Action
National Mental Health Association

Policy Priorities: Housing and Homelessness
Myths: Housing and Homelessness
Campaign to End Hunger and Homelessness

What Parishes Can Do to Implement the Economic Pastoral
U.S. Catholic Conference

How to Sponsor a Homeless Person or Family
"Home Kits" for Homeless Persons
Atlanta Coalition for the Homeless

The Homeless: Myths vs. Reality
Democratic Study Group

V. Organizations to Contact:

National Nonprofit Organizations
National Charitable Organizations
Local Grassroots Organizations
Organizations for Students
Federal Agencies

VI. Bibliography

VII. Free Publications

VIII. Video Materials on Homelessness

IX. Publications Available from the
Homelessness Information Exchange

Homelessness Information Exchange
1830 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
4th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20009
202/462-7551

The Homelessness Information Exchange is a national nonprofit information service on homelessness, offering summaries of model programs, research, funding sources and technical advisors.

The Homelessness Information Exchange emphasizes the need to address homelessness within the context of community development by providing information on a continuum of solutions including emergency shelters, support services, transitional and permanent housing and preventive strategies.

Reproduction of this publication made possible with the support of the Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C.

I. *The Problem of Homelessness Nationwide*
Homelessness Information Exchange

The Problem of Homelessness Nationwide

Homelessness is a crisis in the lives of countless numbers of Americans.

The problem is of an indeterminate magnitude. Nationwide estimates range from the most modest federal figures of 350,000 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Report on Homelessness and Emergency Shelters, 1984), to the more accepted figure from those in the field of between 2 and 3 million (Community for Creative Non-Violence, Congressional Testimony, 1980). In Washington, D.C., alone, the most reliable estimates range from 7,000 to 10,000.

The homeless are no longer only skid-row alcoholics. They are young and old, abled and disabled. They are deinstitutionalized psychiatric patients, unemployed individuals and families, disabled veterans, runaway youth, teenage mothers, low-income families displaced by an inability to pay escalating housing costs, and countless others who find themselves outside of a shrunken social service network. Their situations are diverse, but they are linked by a common thread of poverty and lack of housing.

The causes of homelessness are complex. They include cutbacks in federal housing outlays, a lack of community facilities offering mental health care, the displacement of low-income housing units due to commercial development, the dramatic transformation of America's largest industries, the breakdown of the family unit, and the degrading cycles of substance abuse.

Homeless persons lack secure housing, food, showers, and clothes. They need attention and support, counseling, job training, medical diagnosis, child care, assistance in obtaining benefits, and an opportunity to realize their worth in society.

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development study, the average age of homeless persons is between late 20s and early 30s. The study estimated that 38 percent had been recently evicted, more than half were in shelters for the first time, and 50 percent were homeless due to a personal crisis.

While this 1984 study estimated that 23 percent of the population was made up of families, the U.S. Conference of Mayors' survey of 25 cities in 1987 found that the percentage of families had risen to 33 percent. Seventy percent of these families are headed by a single parent. The number of families requesting shelter has increased by about 31 percent during the last two years.

The Conference of Mayors found that the demand for shelter has increased each year since 1985 at an average rate of 21-25 percent. Most cities report an inability to meet the need for emergency services. This is not surprising as HUD reported in 1984 that only 111,000 homeless persons can be housed in this country on any given night.

Although much attention has been given to substance abuse and chronic mental illness among homeless persons, the Robert Wood Johnson Health Care for the Homeless project found that these were not primary characteristics of the persons they served. According to the statistics, 84 percent were not suffering from chronic mental illness, 87 percent were not drug abusers, and 62 percent were not alcohol abusers. Fifty-three percent had at least a high school education.

The problem of homelessness illustrates a national epidemic -- the most severe housing crisis since the Depression. In New York and Boston, there is a less than one percent vacancy rate in low-income, rental housing in the city. The National Housing Law Project in Washington, D.C., reports that in 1985, 2.5 million persons were involuntarily displaced, while 500,000 low-rent units are lost each year. Between 1970 and 1982, the nation lost 1,116,000 single-room-occupancy units -- nearly half of its supply.

Nationwide we are struggling to comprehend how in this day and age, when so many people are so well off, we have people who do not have shelter.

In response to this epidemic of homelessness, concerned individuals are operating shelters, forming task forces, conducting research, confronting public officials, and attempting to coordinate housing and human services.

While the numbers of homeless people have increased, so too have the number of those organizations, programs, funding sources and policy makers that are becoming involved. Traditional services are being challenged as the homeless population changes, creating a demand for new types of services and approaches.

A Massachusetts Association for Mental Health report, An Integrated Approach, states that "homelessness is a problem of such massive proportions and astonishing complexities that only a course of action which integrates all forces and resources at hand--public, private, government and provider--can begin to address the needs of people with no place to be."

II. *Ways You Can Help the Homeless*
Homelessness Information Exchange

Ways You Can Help the Homeless

Homeless people are found in communities of all sizes and economic makeup. There are no simple solutions to homelessness. Though the causes of homelessness and needs of homeless people are diverse, we are all capable of responding to this great human tragedy on an individual level.

Every member of the community has the ability to make a difference. Many people are volunteering their time or skills, starting charitable funds, advocating for policy changes, and even establishing new programs. Keep in mind that any effort to help the homeless was started by an individual who was concerned enough to take action -- someone who realized that people and resources could be used more effectively to help the homeless.

The following options for helping the homeless in your community offer suggestions for becoming involved in education, volunteerism and advocacy.

Education

Understanding the nature and extent of homelessness is an important beginning to responding to homelessness. Find out:

- Who are the homeless? Are they predominantly men, women or families? What are the characteristics of the subgroups of the homeless population?
- What major factors have led to homelessness?
- Has the number of homeless persons changed significantly in recent years?
- How many children are homeless? Are they able to maintain consistent schooling?
- Are there enough programs for mentally ill homeless persons?
- Has neighborhood opposition thwarted any attempts to create facilities for the homeless?
- What is the availability of day care for homeless families?
- What types of programs have a long-term impact in assisting this population?

For information regarding these and other questions:

- Contact people who work directly with the homeless. Shelters and food programs are usually listed in the phone book under emergency services.
- Talk with homeless people.

- Check with others in your church, civic organization or workplace who are involved in helping the homeless.
- Contact your local Department of Human or Social Services or local chapters of the United Way of America.
- Obtain studies that have been conducted on homelessness or related issues in your community.
- Contact national organizations that advocate for the poor and homeless. (See list in Section V.)
- Write to your member of congress.
- Follow local and national news coverage.
- Check indexes of journals and newspapers for articles on homelessness.
- Read the publications listed in the bibliography. (See Section VI.)

Effective efforts to help the homeless draw upon a broad spectrum of involvement: the public and business sectors, the religious community, neighborhood groups, educators, medical and legal professionals, and individuals in the community.

One person's awareness and concern often stimulates the participation of others. Use the information you have gained to inform others.

Volunteerism

Working directly with homeless persons is one of the best ways to learn who the homeless are and what they need.

Contact local programs to find out how you can be most helpful. People who operate programs for the homeless depend upon the work of countless volunteers every day. They know how to utilize your talents and how to involve volunteers working with this population for the first time.

What resources do you and/or a group of others have to contribute? Be creative. Consider any variation of the following:

- Volunteer to work directly with the homeless, i.e., work the night shift in a shelter, help women find child care and job counseling, prepare or serve meals, and offer encouragement and friendship.

- Offer your skills to support the operation of a program, i.e., accounting, management, building maintenance, carpentry, tutoring, clerical duties, public relations, fundraising, legal or medical assistance, writing, editing, mental health or dental care, child care or counseling.

Examples:

- Dentists, physicians, psychologists and lawyers are joining in many cities across the country to offer free assistance on a rotating basis.
- High school and university students are starting shelters, coordinating volunteers, and encouraging faculty to promote needed research.
- Community businesses are getting involved by providing job training, financial assistance and by encouraging their employees to volunteer.
- Volunteer to support a homeless person or family as they readjust to permanent situations.
- Offer to provide transportation for homeless children to school or offer after-school care for working parents.
- Volunteer to work with program directors who are coordinating field trips, picnics or art workshops for homeless children. Family shelters are often overburdened by the needs of children and may have little ability to provide a recreative environment.
- Offer an in-kind service from your own workplace or community groups, i.e., xeroxing, printing, transportation, marketing, electrical work, plumbing.
- Donate goods, i.e., clothing, food, building supplies, bedding, cleaning products, kitchen utensils, furniture, books, computer equipment.
- Donate money individually or with others to support a local program or create a special fund.

Examples:

- Target small pools of money to help families make security deposits or meet first month's rent. This is often the barrier that prevents the homeless from making long-term advancements. Churches have been active in creating funds for eviction relief to help families meet increased rents or utility payments.
- Launch a fund to encourage matching contributions from other individuals, employees or groups.

Advocacy

Advocacy is critical to developing long-term initiatives to alleviate homelessness. Advocacy means working on behalf of the homeless to bring about positive changes in policies and programs. Advocacy involves working with various sectors of the community--e.g., city or county officials, direct service providers and other members of the private sector--to develop workable strategies.

An effective advocate is well-informed on the issue and has experience working with homeless people.

Explore the following questions in your community:

- What are your community's policies related to homelessness?
- How much does your city spend on housing and support services? How have these amounts changed in recent years?
- What resources are available for the homeless in your community? Do the homeless have access to them? Why or why not?
- What initiatives concerning homelessness are pending in your city council?
- How are current efforts to improve services and develop housing either promoted or threatened?
- How many vacant public housing units are there in your area? Why?
- Cities receive money from the federal government to maintain public housing units. Is your city utilizing those funds responsibly? Is the public aware of activities in this area?
- Are your tax dollars are being spent wisely? How much money is being spent on emergency measures in comparison with long-term initiatives?

Local housing advocates and shelter providers are informed on these issues. Contact them for further information.

The same questions should also be brought to the attention of state and federal representatives.

To be an advocate:

- Promote educational materials.
- Attend public meetings.

- Sponsor a workshop, presentation or panel discussion for an organization to which you belong. Invite an experienced advocate and a homeless person.

- Call or write letters to the media and to public officials. Inform them of your concern for the homeless. Addresses for public officials are available at the local library. Letters to members of Congress may be addressed as follows:

Senator:	Representative:
The Honorable United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	The Honorable U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

You can call your Senators or Representatives by telephoning the Capitol Switchboard at 202/224-3121.

III. *Building a Coalition in Your Community*
Homelessness Information Exchange

Building a Coalition in Your Community

Local coalitions and task forces are increasingly serving as a focal point for action on the issue of homelessness. This kind of undertaking may require establishing working relationships between groups or sectors of the community which have previously operated independently of each other. The benefits of such collaboration, however, are immeasurable. A community-wide coalition is a valuable mechanism for planning and coordinating services for homeless people. The consolidation of resources and opportunity for dialogue have strengthened local efforts to address homelessness in a comprehensive manner and provide direction for policy development.

Establishing a Coalition

Establishing a coalition or coordinating body requires a clear understanding of the focus of the group, organizations or individuals which can contribute to its purpose, and a person or organization to take leadership in bringing together the relevant people or groups. The lead organization or individual should:

1. Identify groups/individuals to participate as members of the coalition. This may include groups which do not usually work together; for example, churches and the local housing authority. Private nonprofit organizations, the religious community and local government are key sectors to involve, but the business community, for-profit service organizations, and academic institutions may also be instrumental to new resource development and long-term planning.

2. Contact these groups to explain the proposed purpose of the coalition and its benefits to members as well as the community at large. Benefits may include access to additional resources and technical assistance, information sharing, increased cooperation among local service organizations, and long-term planning to more effectively address homelessness.

3. Plan and conduct the initial meeting with a clear focus and agenda.

Once formed, the coalition should:

1. Establish goals, objectives and plans of action to address local needs along a continuum consisting of emergency, transitional, and long-term approaches to addressing homelessness.

2. Conduct an assessment of the resources and needs of participating organizations.

3. Identify appropriate roles for participants and assign responsibilities for carrying out plans of the coalition.

4. Designate members to provide oversight for implementation of goals, objectives, and plans of action.

Assessment and Coordination

One of the most important functions of a coalition is to identify the capacity of its members and utilize their skills and resources to achieve its stated purposes. Effective coordination will lead to decreased duplication and increased impact of activities. An assessment of the resources and needs of each member organization can capture information regarding:

- current level of available services;
- gaps in services;
- needs of service providers;
- comparative costs of services; and
- barriers to providing services.

The assessment should identify strengths and resources of each organization and the possible contributions to be made to the work of the coalition. Likewise, it should contribute to an understanding of the needs of each organization and how they may be met through participation in the coalition.

Information gained from an assessment can also be utilized to:

- plan for new or expanded services;
- prioritize needs;
- target funds and other resources to meet priority needs; and
- educate providers about the availability of other services.

The success of a local coalition depends largely on the commitment of its members and their ability to communicate their ideas and concerns. Coalitions have accomplished goals that organizations could not have achieved on their own. In addition to increasing the level and quality of services, they have succeeded in changing local, state, and federal policies, establishing a right to shelter, and educating the public about homeless people and their needs.

IV. Printed Materials

Checklist for Action

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act provides funds for a range of services homeless individuals need. Individuals with mental illnesses who are homeless have the same needs as all homeless people--shelter, food, clothing, health and support--but also additional needs resulting from their illness. They can benefit both from generic homeless programs and from specialized mental health services. The most effective strategies for mental health associations to pursue in working with homeless mentally ill people is therefore to become involved in broader efforts in the community or state which address the comprehensive needs of all homeless people.

Strategies

- Identify the local task force, coalition or committee which has responsibility for the problem of homelessness. (This may be a public agency or a coalition of nonprofit agencies.) Become involved in this group and influence its plans for meeting the needs of homeless mentally ill people.

- If no such task force or group exists, initiate one by pulling together Salvation Army, church groups and others in your community who are helping homeless people.

- consider the need for a separate mental health coalition (with, for example, community mental health centers, psychosocial rehabilitation agencies, consumer groups, family groups) to focus on this new law and its potential to assist in developing and supporting needed services in your community.

- Thoroughly review the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-77) and identify programs which could fill gaps in the service system in your community or state.

- Identify a lead volunteer or staff person to head up your initiative--your goal is to ensure that funds from this Act are utilized in your community.

- Be sure public officials in your state and community are looking at this Act together with local resources so as to design a comprehensive, coordinated plan for meeting the varied needs of homeless mentally ill people. Coordination between recipients of funds under this new law is essential as referrals among the various programs will be frequent (i.e., between health services and mental health services and transitional housing and permanent housing and emergency services, etc.).

Processing Funds Through the Community Mental Health Block Grant

- Be sure the governor of your state applies for the new community health block grant funds.
- Make sure that MHA members are on the State Medical Health Councils, mandated by P.L. 99-660, since those Councils have additional responsibilities under this new law.
- Become involved in the development of comprehensive mental health programs in your community which could then be funded with these dollars.
- Comment on the state's description of intended use of funds, which you are entitled to do by law.
- Be sure the state applies for assistance from the national Institute of Mental Health if you feel this could be helpful.
- Once any mental health program for the homeless is initiated, contact your local Social Security office for assistance in assessing homeless individuals who may be eligible for disability benefits. The Social Security Administration has special, expedited procedures for this purpose. Contact NMHA if your local Social Security office is not cooperative.

Accessing Funds Through the Community Support Program

- Be sure that your state CSP director plans to apply for funds under this program and ascertain how and where such funds would be used in your state.
- Offer suggestions to your CSP director regarding planning and implementation of local projects for helping homeless mentally ill people that you would like to see funded (such as a self-help, drop-in or outreach program).

Accessing Funds Through the Substance Abuse Demonstration Programs

- Encourage agencies planning to provide substance abuse counseling to homeless individuals through this program to include a component addressing the special problems of mentally ill people who also abuse drugs or alcohol, and to plan how to provide appropriate services to this group.

Accessing Funds Through the Primary Health Care Grant Program

- Check with local community health centers, neighborhood health centers or other nonprofit health agencies which may be applying for an award under the Primary Health Care Grant Program. Encourage them to pick up the option of providing mental health services, and of integrating that mental health component with the existing local mental health system. Remind them that the mental health services can be provided either directly or through contracts with existing community mental health agencies. Especially encourage them to utilize self-help groups (as suggested in the law) and to contract with protection and advocacy (P&A) agencies for advocacy services for these homeless people.

- Check with your P&A agency to be sure they are aware of this new law and the possibility of receiving funds through a health care provider for mental health advocacy services. Encourage the P&A agency to act to facilitate all applicants in your state having a mental health component in their health care program.

- Even if there is no mental health component in a local primary health care project, be sure there are good linkages and referral mechanisms with local mental health programs.

- Encourage primary health care providers to meet with their local Social Security office (see above the comment under community mental health).

Accessing Manpower Through the National Health Service Corps

- Encourage local health and mental health provider agencies to use the National Health Service Corps to obtain additional mental health professionals for their program.

Accessing Housing Funds

- Check your state's Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Plan and its adequacy with respect to housing needs of individuals with mental illnesses. Review its strategies to recognize the special needs of people with mental illness, which are required by law.

Accessing Funds Through the Supportive Housing Demonstration

- Identify groups applying for a grant under the Supportive Housing Program for transitional housing for homeless persons with mental illness. Work with them to ensure the program includes comprehensive services.

- Consider applying for, or setting up a nonprofit corporation to apply for funds for transitional housing for homeless persons with mental illnesses.

- Check with your state mental health agency to make sure they are applying for the Permanent Housing for Disabled People program. (Only states may apply for these funds.)

- Identify for the governor local sponsors of housing for individuals with psychiatric disabilities which could be eligible as providers, if the state receives an award under the Permanent Housing for Disabled People program. Consider innovative approaches to housing, especially cooperative apartments, lodges, etc., as well as group homes.

- Consider sponsoring a community residential program for seriously mentally ill people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, using these federal funds.

- Be sure your state officials, as well as local sponsors, are aware of the supplemental funds that can be provided to projects that receive funds under the Supportive Housing program so as to meet costs not covered under the Supportive Housing funds.

Accessing Other Housing Funds

- Check with local shelters to see if they could benefit from an Emergency Shelter Grant from their local board, especially to provide supportive serves (including assistance in obtaining benefits as well as linkages to the local mental health system).

- Seek out the local Public Housing Authority and encourage it to apply for funds under Section 8, Moderate Rehabilitation Assistance Program, to rehabilitate housing to be used as single-room-occupancy group homes for homeless persons with mental illness.

Accessing Money for Food and Emergency Services

- Check that shelters and other programs serving homeless people are assisting homeless mentally ill people obtain food stamps, and that the shelters are making maximum use of federal emergency assistance with respect to surplus food.

Accessing Educational services

- Encourage your state education agency to apply for a grant for ensuring education of homeless children and youth.
- Review your state's plan for Education of Homeless Children to ensure identification of emotionally disturbed children who need special education services.
- Identify and contact the new Office of Coordination of Education of Homeless Children and youth in your state and work with them to ensure linkages to the mental health system for homeless children in need of services.
- Advocate for your local schools to reach out and assist homeless families in school, to arrange transportation and to identify those in need of special education or mental health services because of emotional problems.

Accessing Job Training Funds

- Encourage local providers of services to homeless people to utilize the new job training demonstration funds now available for basic skills training and related job-finding activities, and to provide such services for homeless people who are mentally ill.

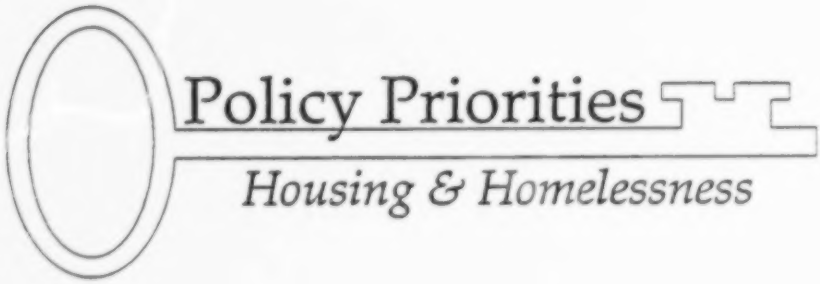
Linking with Community Services Homeless Grant Programs

- Encourage local Community action Committees to coordinate their programs with other programs for homeless people in your community, especially mental health programs.

Accessing Funds for Veterans

- Contact the Veterans Administration regarding programs for homeless veterans under this and other laws. Contact veterans groups and enlist their support.

Information from: National Mental Health Association
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971
703/684-7722



The Campaign To End Hunger and Homelessness
714 G Street, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003

Four Policy Recommendations

1) We must provide shelter for the growing legions of homeless people in America by expanding and fully funding the shelter assistance programs passed by Congress in 1987.

- **The Number of Homeless.** Estimates of the homeless population vary widely, depending on the source, from a high of over 3 million (National Coalition for the Homeless) to 350,000 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). The fact is that there is no satisfactory method of counting the homeless; the even grimmer fact is that while no one can agree on exactly how many people are homeless, everyone who has studied the problem agrees that more and more people are becoming homeless each year.

  A 1987 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that demand for emergency shelter assistance had gone up by about 20 percent per year in recent years.

- **Who Are The Homeless.**

  Between 30 and 40 percent of the homeless are families. In some cities such as Providence, Trenton and New York, as many as 50 to 60 percent of the homeless are families.

  Homeless families are the single fastest growing segment of the homeless population.

  Roughly two-thirds of the homeless are single men.

  A high percentage of homeless men--between one-third and one-half--are veterans.

  About one-fourth of the homeless are considered chronically mentally ill.

  Between 10 and 15 percent of the total homeless population is single women.

  A New York Mayoral Commission in 1987 found that evictions by friends and relatives was the most common reason families cite for becoming homeless.

  The homeless are overwhelmingly very poor people.

  Homelessness is a problem in rural, as well as urban, areas.

- **Congressional Response.** In 1987, Congress responded to the homeless crisis and adopted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. This law established a series of new programs to greatly increase shelter construction and rehabilitation assistance, provide transitional housing assistance to help homeless persons move from dependency to self-sufficiency, finance new construction or rehabilitation of permanent housing for the elderly homeless, and offer special rehabilitation and rental subsidy funds to stimulate the rehabilitation of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels, a major source of housing for homeless men and women. Other programs provide funds to guarantee homeless children education, special additional funds for combatting mental illness, and so on.

  Although over $600 million was authorized in these various programs for the current fiscal year, less than half has actually been appropriated. Moreover, the Administration has failed to meet several guidelines for issuing regulations to carry out the programs. In two instances, advocates for the homeless were forced to sue government agencies in court before progress could be made.

  Finally, even if they were fully funded, these short-term efforts to provide **shelter** to the homeless fail to address the underlying crisis which causes so many to become homeless: the lack of permanent, affordable housing and adequate services in the community to assist homeless people with special needs.

2) We must guarantee that by the end of the next presidential term, no family living in poverty will have to pay more than 30 percent of its income for decent housing.

- **The Hidden Homeless.** The federal government has sustained a bi-partisan commitment to helping Americans find decent, affordable housing since 1937. Yet 50 years later, only one-third of all American families who meet the government's own test of need are receiving federal housing subsidies. Millions of these families are trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty because of the huge amounts of their income which they must pay for rent. These are the "hidden homeless," who are only one paycheck or family crisis away from a shelter or welfare hotel. These are the families who have been forced to double up in the homes of friends or families and who will end up homeless unless they can find alternative housing at a price they can afford.

- **The Cost of Housing.** For the vast majority of poor people, the single most critical housing problem is the high cost. Although there are shortages of decent housing in many communities, most poor families do in fact live in decent housing. But the prices they pay are indecent.

  Using 1986 dollars, the cost of the median-priced rental unit rose from about $315 in 1975 to near $365 in 1987. That's an increase of nearly 14 percent. Meanwhile, the number of housing units renting for less than $300 per month--the amount a family can afford on a $12,000 per year salary if they pay one-third of their income for rent--**declined** by over 1 million units between 1974 and 1983. Meanwhile, the number of units renting for more than $400 increased dramatically during the same time period. During this same period, the real income of young married couples **declined** by 14 percent. Single-parent household income dropped by 34 percent during the same period of time.

  These diverging lines--steadily rising rents and sinking incomes--mean more and more families are being crushed by the burden of paying for their housing. Young single-parent families have seen their rent burden surge from 35 percent of income in 1974 to 58 percent in 1987.

  In 1983, 5.4 million renter households--or 18 percent of all renters--paid more than 60 percent of their incomes for rent. Ninety-five percent of these families had incomes below $15,000 per year.

- **Earn Less, Pay More.** By contrast, two thirds of the renter households with incomes of more than $35,000 paid less than 15 percent of their income for rent.

  In other words, the less income you earn, the more of it you can expect to pay for housing.

- **Federal Commitment.** The housing crisis facing poor people cannot be solved without an irrevocable commitment to ensure that no poor household has to pay more than a fair share of their income for decent housing. Until this goal is met, millions of families will be threatened with homelessness every day of their lives.

  The federal government should adopt a program to provide special housing assistance grants to poor families which can be used to reduce their rental costs in decent housing to an affordable amount. This assistance must be made available to every single household which qualifies.

3) We must address the scarcity of housing in both cities and rural areas by reviving the federal government's housing investment with private and nonprofit agencies to preserve and expand the supply of affordable housing.

- **Housing Scarcity.** Although the high cost of housing remains the most fundamental problem facing low income people today, millions of Americans still cannot find decent housing at any price. This is especially true in rural areas where credit is not available and where poor families often still live in homes without running water. The same is true in large cities and suburbs and towns for large families, the disabled, single adults, and for many elderly.

- **Substandard Housing.** Structurally unsound housing remains a problem throughout the country. In 1983, 4.5 million homeowners and 5 million renters occupied housing that did not meet minimum quality standards. The absolute number of low income families living in substandard housing increased by 20 percent from 1 million in 1973 to 1.2 million ten years later. Twenty-six percent of renters with incomes below $5,000 occupied structurally unsound housing, according to a recent study by the Joint Center for Housing at Harvard University.

- **Rising Costs.** Housing affordability has also priced millions of housing units out of poor people's reach. In 1970, the nation boasted 14.9 million rental housing units that could be rented at 30 percent of a $5,000 income. The number of renter households with $5,000 per year or less at that time was 8.4 million. But ten years later, the number of affordable units had dropped to only 2 million, while the number of households declined only to 5.5 million.

- **Subsidized Housing.** While the supply of government subsidized housing has increased since such programs first began in 1937, the fact is that the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) now provides subsidies to only 4 million households. So while the need for housing

among very poor families grew from 1970 to 1983 by leaps and bounds, the federal government has provided--in its entire 50-year housing history--only about one-third the number of affordable housing units that have vanished from the inventory through rent increases, demolition and abandonment within a short ten-year period.

- **Policy Needs.** There is a critical and growing need for rehabilitation and new production of affordable, decent housing throughout America. State and local governments have been forced to innovate and plow their own funds into a variety of new housing efforts. The federal government must re-enter the rehabilitation and production area with massive and dependable support. These efforts should stress a heavy reliance on local ingenuity and program design. Funds should be made available for housing which principally serves low income people. Special emphasis should be placed on developing housing for long-term affordable use by low income people in nonspeculative ownership models, such as nonprofit community-based ownership and limited equity housing cooperatives.

4) We must guarantee that no family ever becomes homeless because of the loss of federal subsidies for affordable housing.

- **The Homelessness Threat.** Even poor Americans who receive federal housing assistance are not safe from the threat of homelessness. Millions of apartments now receiving federal subsidies are covered by contracts that will expire within the next 10 to 20 years. Hundreds of thousands of others are receiving mortgage subsidies which enable the private, profit-motivated owners to pay off their debts after 20 years and convert their properties to condominiums, high income rentals, or some other use.

  If steps aren't taken quickly, the nation could lose billions of dollars in investments already made in assisted housing; poor tenants could lose their homes and be forced into the shelter or welfare hotel system; and the housing crisis for poor people could increase even further.

- **The Causes.** This new homelessness threat through displacement from existing subsidized housing is caused by two related actions:

  Expiring Use Restrictions: Nearly one million housing units were built by private, profit-motivated owners under mortgage subsidy programs enacted in the 1960s. These programs offered owners incentives to build rental housing which would be affordable to poor renters. Although the mortgage and subsidy terms run for 40 years, owners who have participated in the program for twenty years have the opportunity to prepay their mortgages without prior HUD approval. Such a prepayment would eliminate any restrictions on rents charged to tenants and enable owners to convert the property to other uses such as condominiums and other high income rentals.

  According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), over 300,000 units of housing now receiving subsidies under these programs--rougly a half--will be eligible to prepay over the next 20 years.

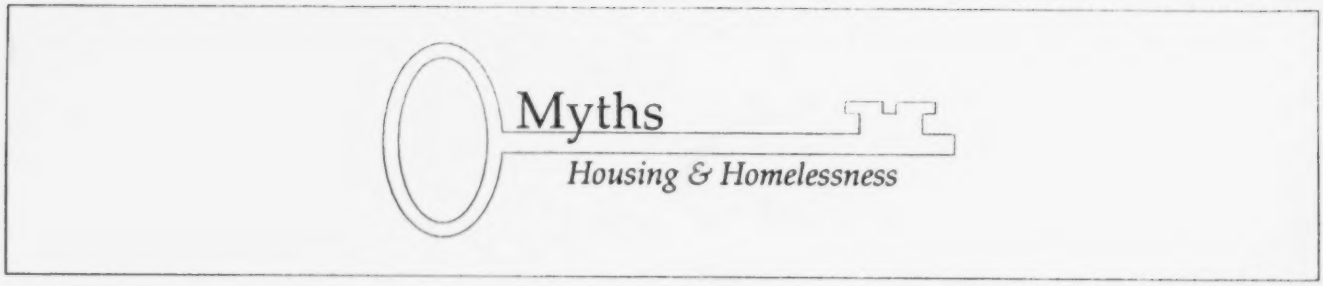
  Expiring Subsidy Contracts. Nearly two million more apartments receive federal assistance through the Section 8 program. Owners receive direct subsidy payments to make up

the difference between the HUD-approved rent on their properties and what tenants pays for rent, which is set at 30 percent of their income. These subsidies were made available both for owners of newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated housing, as well as to owners of existing housing who agreed to rent to eligible program participants.

In the new construction and rehabilitation programs, HUD signed contracts ranging from five to 20 years with owners. When these contracts expire, owners have the option not to renew them, and to convert the low income units to other uses. In the Existing Housing, or Certificate, program, HUD agrees to provide the subsidies through local public housing agencies for 15 years. The newer housing Vouchers instituted by the Reagan Administration have even shorter contract terms--five years.

Whether these subsidy contracts expire naturally or because an owner chooses not to renew his or her commitment to low income housing, the result is the same: Tenants cannot afford the real market rents which owners expect to receive for the housing. Nor can they compete for the units if the owners choose to convert them to some other use, such as condominiums.

- **National Commitment.** Hundreds of thousands of poor tenants could become homeless because of these two possibilities. The federal government must commit to providing sufficient new subsidy authorities to guarantee that no family ever becomes homeless because of the expiration of a subsidy contract or the sale or conversion of an existing low income property. Similarly, the government must commit to reinvesting in the existing supply of subsidized housing to insure that whether publicly or privately owned, necessary repairs are made in a timely way and good living conditions are maintained for the tenants.



1) The federal government has been pouring money into massive low income housing programs for decades and none of them have worked.

No. First, we're not "pouring" money into housing. Since these programs began in 1937, there have been only three years in which spending on housing programs has gone above one percent of the total federal budget.

Second, despite this low level of spending, the funds we have spent have achieved many of the goals that were set by Congress. For example, the homeownership rate in America is one of the highest in the world--directly because of government intervention through the FHA and other programs. Where the federal government has funded programs, the results have been substantial.

The most obvious sign of housing problems--homelessness--has increased dramatically in the last 8 years, particularly among families. However, this increase has ocurred at a time when the government has all but eliminated federal support for low income housing programs. Since 1981, funds for new housing commitments have been cut by over 75 percent. Men, women, and children are suffering because government is not spending enough, not because it's spending too much.

2) Housing assistance does not go to the "truly needy." It's just another welfare fraud that gives people more than they need to get by.

Wrong. To receive housing assistance, recipients must have incomes below 50 percent of the median income for their area. Nationally, this means a family of four cannot make more than $13,000 per year. In fact, half the families living in public housing or receiving rent assistance have incomes under $6,700 per year. Even when families do receive assistance, they still must pay 30 percent of their income for rent--twice the 15 percent which is the median level paid by families earning more than $35,000 per year.

Young families with children are particularly hard hit. From 1973 to 1986, the real income of young married couple families **declined** by 14 percent. Meanwhile, rents **increased** by the same percent, meaning that these families were continually paying more and earning less.

Campaign To End Hunger and Homelessness
714 G Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003, (202) 547-0461

3) After all these years, most people who need housing assistance have been served. We don't need to continue expanding these programs.

False. There are 8 million people eligible for housing assistance who aren't receiving it. These rates are low because not enough funds are available to assist all those who apply. In fact, the total number of families with incomes below $10,000 per year who are eligible but not receiving assistance has **grown** by two million since 1974. And, on average, families wait for housing assistance for over two years after they've applied.

Of all federal programs targeted to poor people, housing assistance programs have one of the lowest participation rates.

4) Federal housing assistance funds have not been reduced. We're helping more people today than at any other time in history.

Not quite. It's true that the federal government now subsidizes more housing units than ever before. But that rate of growth has been throttled over the last 10 years and the real effects of these policies are only just beginning to be felt.

In each of the last seven years, the federal government has provided housing assistance to an average of less than 85,000 households who had not already been receiving it--not even half the number which was provided in 1981 or any of the preceding ten years.

The effects of these policies are now becoming clear. Families in desperate need cannot get assistance. These families are becoming homeless in record numbers, or moving in with other families, producing a dramatic increase in overcrowding.

Finally, the form of federal housing assistance has changed dramatically in this decade. There has been a virtual end to subsidies for new construction or substantial rehabilitation programs which add new affordable units to the housing supply. Meanwhile, the destruction of the affordable housing stock continues through demolition, conversion, and rent increases. Current federal policies are actually **worsening** the housing crisis for poor people.

What Parishes Can Do To Implement The Economic Pastoral

There are many ways that a parish can work to implement the bishops' pastoral letter *Economic Justice for All*. Below you will find some ideas for parish action. These have been gathered from the Office of Community Relations in the Diocese of Toledo, the Department of Human Concerns in the Archdiocese of Newark, and from a number of parishes throughout the country. If your parish is responding to *Economic Justice for All* through a particular project or program, write it up and send it to *Working for Economic Justice*. The U.S. Catholic Conference Office of Implementation will use reports from parishes in future issues of this newsletter.

Education

- Start an adult study group on the pastoral. A variety of models have already been developed by dioceses and groups throughout the country. A listing of these models and ordering information can be obtained through the Office of Implementation.

- Make copies of the full text or a summary of the pastoral letter available to every member of your parish. The letter can be ordered in a variety of formats from the Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, U.S. Catholic Conference, by calling its toll-free number: 1-800-USCC. An inexpensive four-page abbreviated version of the pastoral letter is available from the St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1615 Republic St., Cincinnati, OH 45210.

- Sponsor a three-night parish mission on "The Catholic Call to Economic Justice." Each night of the mission could include a presentation on the pastoral, time for personal reflection, a communal prayer or penance service, and a social. At the end of the mission, invite all of the participants to make the Pledge of Commitment for Economic Justice (see page 5 for more information about this pledge).

- Feature quotes from the pastoral letter in the parish bulletins on a regular basis. *The Pastorals on Sundays* (see page 6) is an indispensable resource for selecting quotes that relate to the Sunday scripture readings.

- Have a group of interested parishioners research the poverty and unemployment statistics for your county. This information can be obtained from your city or county planning or community action offices, or from census data, to be found at your local library. Share this information with the parish through a bulletin insert.

- Organize a panel discussion on the issues of poverty, unemployment, food and agriculture, and the global economy, that the bishops addressed in the pastoral letter. Be sure to involve poor and unemployed people and farmers to share their own experiences of how their lives have been affected by these issues.

Parish Life

- Work with your parish Liturgy Committee to incorporate into liturgies prayers of petition for economic justice and for poor and unemployed people. Plan a special Sunday liturgy on the theme of economic justice, and choose special songs and prayers that emphasize that theme.

- Together with your Parish Council and Finance Committee, consider tithing a percentage of your weekly parish collection to a special "economic justice fund." Part of the fund could be set aside for meeting the immediate needs of the poor and unemployed in your community; the other portion should be used to support special projects that address the causes of poverty and unemployment.

- Make it part of Parish Council and School Board procedures to evaluate all major purchases in light of fair wages to workers, the impact of that purchase on parish programs for the poor, and the kind of witness it gives to the parish.

- Organize reflection/action groups in your parish for specific constituencies to give them the opportunity to discuss how the pastoral letter affects their everyday lives of work and family. Groups could be organized for business managers, the unemployed, parents, farmers, laborers, investors. Train leaders for each of these groups. Share the outcomes with the rest of the parish.

Service

- Start a working support group for the unemployed in your parish. Utilizing their skills and the contacts of employers in your parish community, organize a job bank, referral service, and resume-writing program.

- Organize a parish-based food cooperative or food-buying club that purchases produce from local farmers. Make special efforts to include low-income people from your community in leadership positions in the co-op. Check with your local food stamp office about ways that low-income people can use food stamps to purchase food from the co-op.

- Publish a list for the parish of local service projects that would welcome an hour or two monthly of parishioners' volunteer time. Include soup kitchens, shelters for the homeless, community action organizations, and unemployment centers.

- Plan now to do a parish-based or community-wide weatherization project next fall for low-income families and the elderly of the parish. Make special efforts to involve youth in all aspects of the project, including manual labor and procuring materials.

- Volunteer as a parish to prepare and serve a meal at a local soup kitchen on a regular basis. Involve as many different parish organizations as possible in this service, assigning responsibility to a different group each time your parish serves the meal. Don't forget to involve children!

Continued on page 8

WHAT PARISHES CAN DO

Continued from page 3

• Evaluate the use of buildings in your parish to explore whether any part of your physical plant could house programs for low-income or unemployed people in your community. If space for such a program is found and approved by the Parish Council, form a planning committee of parishioners and community representatives (especially low-income people) to develop the plans and funding necessary to convert your buildings. Find as many ways as possible to involve a large number of parishioners in all aspects of this project.

Social Action

• Convene a candidates' forum in your parish before the next election in your community or state. Invite members from area churches and community organizations to participate in the planning and the forum. Be sure to question the candidates on their stands on a variety of economic justice and human needs issues.

• Organize a parish letter-writing campaign to congresspersons on specific economic justice legislation or policies. Prepare people to participate by teaching them about the issues through printed literature and/or educational programs. The U.S. Catholic Conference has published a Statement on Political Responsibility, which can aid you in selecting issues for your campaign. This statement discusses the role of the Church in political life and summarizes public policy positions of the U.S. Catholic Conference on 14 separate issues. Excerpts from this statement in a form suitable for bulletin inserts are available from the USCC Office of Domestic Social Development, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

• Organize a parish voter registration drive. A resource book on voter registration and voter education, published by the USCC Office of Domestic Social Development, is a good guide for assisting parishes and dioceses to organize successful drives. Call your diocesan social action office to obtain a copy.

• Provide financial and volunteer support from parish members for a local community economic development project being run by low-income people. Your diocesan Campaign for Human Development (CHD) Office can put you in touch with such projects or provide you with information about how to start one in your parish.

• Invite representatives from a local CHD-funded organization to give a presentation to your parish about its efforts to work for social justice. At that presentation, discuss ways your parish can join or support the group.

• Pick one local economic justice issue (e.g., low-income housing, AFDC payments, homelessness, unemployment) that your parish can organize around. Make your organizing effort a priority for the parish. Be sure to interview as many parishioners as possible to determine which economic justice issue is of primary concern.

– Mary Baudouin

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Continued from page 7

well as many parishes across the country, the economy pastoral has stirred a collective conscience and collective will to work for economic justice at home, step by step. Their stories are revealing not only of what a parish is, but what it can be: a vital part of the solutions to the problems we must confront.

– Peter Crowe

Office of Implementation
U.S. Catholic Conference
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-4105

WORKING FOR
ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Office of Implementation: The Pastoral Letter on the U.S. Economy

Department of Social Development and World Peace, U.S. Catholic Conference

Director, Editor:	Robert Williams
Assistant Editors:	Paula McCabe
	Sherrill Taylor
Project Coordinators:	Mary Baudouin
	Peter Crowe

Subscription rate $7/year. Send letters to the Editor and other correspondence to "Working for Economic Justice," Office of Implementation, USCC, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue., N.W., Washington, DC 20005. Produced for the Office of Implementation by the Office of Publishing and Promotion Services.

How to Sponsor a Homeless Person or Family

What Sponsorship Means:

According to *Webster's Dictionary,* the first definition of a sponsor (from the Latin for guarantor or surety) is one who presents a candidate for baptism or confirmation and undertakes responsibility for his or her religious education or spiritual welfare. Sponsor is next defined as one who assumes responsibility for some other person or thing. Third, a sponsor is a person or an organization that pays for or plans and carries out a project or activity. The Sponsorship Program for Homeless People, Inc. attempts to encompass these definitions. Money is paid to help homeless people with their deposit and first month's rent--or any part thereof--to move from the street or shelter into apartment/homes and spiritual life of that person or family is nurtured in a gentle, non-threatening manner.

History:

The sponsorship program began in December of 1986 after I returned from the play *The People of the Brick.* It occurred to me to sponsor an individual into an apartment/home and to help with a "Home Kit" of pots and pans, towels, a lamp, tableware, blankets, etc. From that The Sponsorship Program has grown. One hundred and twenty-two people have moved out of shelters or off the street into apartment/homes. "Home Kits" have been given to a couple hundred people and this newspaper, *Good News for Atlanta's Homeless,* continues to grow.

How You Can Get Involved To Be A Sponsor:

If you have been aware of the enormous problems of people who are homeless and have not been sure how you could help, perhaps The Sponsorship Program is an answer. We urge you to call or write for more information. The financial deposits go directly for deposit and first month's rent for people who are working and making the effort to get out of shelters. The funding also goes toward MARTA cards for those sponsored and incidental expenses such as electrical heaters for unheated apartments where gas heaters are out of order. It should be noted that The Sponsorship Program is a nonprofit organization, so any and all contributions are tax deductible.

Information from: The Sponsorship Program Homeless People, Inc.
P.O. Box 54555
Atlanta, GA 30308-0555
404/892-6404

"Home Kits" for Homeless People

The following basic homemaking items are needed now for people moving out of shelters into homes.

Kitchen:

- Can openers and spatulas
- Sharp knives, skillets and utensils
- Pots and pans, hot plates
- Roaster/toaster ovens, gas stoves
- Crock pots, soup boilers
- Knives, forks and spoons
- Plates, glasses, cups, bowls
- Basic chairs and dining tables

Bedroom:

- Twin, double and sofa beds
- Cribs, blankets and sheets
- Bed linens, pillows and blankets
- Clocks, clock radios, calendars

Bath:

- Towels, wash cloths, bath mats
- Toilet paper, bar soap, shampoo
- Toothbrushes, shampoo

Other Important items

- Lamps,Bibles and books
- Curtains and throw rugs
- Electric space heaters
- Ironing boards and irons

For Children:

- Clean toys in good repair
- Stuffed animals and squeeze toys
- Building blocks, trucks

Please note: There is a great need for gas stoves and electrical cooking devices such as the roaster/toaster ovens, hot plates and crock pots, since many apartments do not provide stoves. Also, can openers are hard to get as are lamps. Neither come in with much regularity so we make a special request for these. Thank you.

DSG DEMOCRATIC STUDY GROUP • U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
225-5858 • 1422 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

HON. MIKE LOWRY (Wash.) - Chairman

RICHARD P. CONLON — Executive Director

SPECIAL REPORT

No. 100-3

February 18, 1987

The Homeless: Myths vs. Reality

There are more homeless people in America today than at any time since the Great Depression. Despite the last four years of economic recovery, the homeless population has been growing at the rate of about 25% a year, and the number of homeless is expected to increase still further unless action is taken.

The explosion in the number of homeless Americans has outrun the ability of local governments and charitable organizations to cope with the problem. Cities across the country report that homeless people -- including families with children -- are routinely being turned away from emergency shelters due to the lack of space.

Efforts to deal with the homeless crisis have been hampered by persistent myths about who the homeless are, why they are in such a desperate situation, and what can be done to help them. This report addresses the major misconceptions about the homeless, countering myths with facts about the true nature of the homeless crisis.

The report also summarizes legislation introduced in the 100th Congress to deal with the homeless problem -- including the omnibus emergency relief bill introduced by Majority Leader Foley and Rep. McKinney that is expected to be considered by the House early in March.

This report contains the following sections:

		page
I.	Background and Summary	1
II.	Myths About the Homeless	3
III.	Proposed Legislation	7

DSG Contact: Marge Capron

Section I

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

The problem of homelessness has reached crisis proportions in this country over the last few years. Common stereotypes misrepresent the growing homeless population, as they are families with children, newly unemployed, victims of family breakup, and working poor, as well as those suffering from chronic mental illness and drug and alcohol abuse.

During the 1980s, homelessness has been growing at a rate of about 25% a year, and this trend is projected to continue unless new action is taken. Homelessness now affects every region and every type of community -- downtowns, suburbs, and rural areas. No state is exempt from the problem.

In response to this national crisis, House Democrats have made homeless relief legislation a top priority for the 100th Congress.

On January 21, the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee adopted a resolution urging prompt enactment of legislation and appropriations to care for the homeless. The Committee also created a Leadership Task Force on the Homeless, chaired by Rep. Lowry, with the mandate to ensure swift action.

SUMMARY

Myths About the Homeless

Widely held perceptions of the homeless no longer match reality, as the problem has changed so rapidly and fundamentally in the past decade. These outdated stereotypes have become myths which undermine efforts to effectively deal with the homeless crisis.

There are six major myths which perpetuate a distorted picture of the homeless. These myths are: 1) Most of the homeless have always lived this way; 2) The homeless are almost entirely made up of single adults; 3) The vast majority of the homeless are the chronically mentally ill, who generally choose to be homeless; 4) State and local governments and charitable organizations have the resources to handle the homeless problem; 5) Economic growth will solve the problem; and 6) The Federal Government cannot afford to deal with the homeless.

The following facts about the homeless problem contradict each of these myths:

* Most of the homeless have become homeless only in recent years;

* Families with children are the fastest growing group among the homeless, now comprising almost one-third of the homeless population;

* The mentally ill are not a majority of the homeless, and most mentally ill homeless have not chosen to live that way;

* Existing shelter programs are already filled beyond capacity, despite the best efforts of charitable organizations and local governments to create more shelters;

* There is no correlation between an expanding economy and solving the homeless problem. In fact, the fastest growth in homelessness has occurred during the current economic recovery; and

* Modest and targeted federal funding can greatly improve the lives of the homeless without straining the budget.

Proposed Legislation

The major homeless bill that is expected to move rapidly to the House Floor was introduced by Majority Leader Foley and Rep. McKinney, cosponsored by 100 other Members, and endorsed by the House Democratic Leadership. The bill (H.R. 558, Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act) would authorize $500 million in new budget authority in FY 1987 for a variety of homeless relief programs.

The Leadership bill authorizes additional FY 1987 funding for an existing emergency food and shelter program, an ongoing program for rehabilitating buildings into shelters, support services for the homeless at group homes, rental certificates for low-cost rental housing, mental and other health programs for the homeless, and the conversion of surplus government property into homeless facilities.

The Leadership Homeless bill is an emergency measure for the current fiscal year. Rep. Leland has introduced an omnibus bill (H.R. 286) that places more emphasis on long-term solutions by improving the access of the homeless to various assistance programs and by adopting policies to prevent future homelessness.

Additional bills introduced by other Members use AFDC Emergency Assistance funds to create new emergency shelters as well as permanent housing for the homeless, provide authorization for homeless aid programs in FY 1988, and authorize federal grants for the start-up or expansion of shelter and recovery centers.

* * *

Section II

MYTHS ABOUT THE HOMELESS

Understanding the problem of the homeless has been hampered by persistent myths about who the homeless are, why they are in such a desperate situation, and what can be done to help them. This section addresses the major misconceptions about the homeless, and counters each myth with facts which show the true nature of the problem.

MYTH: Most of the homeless have always lived this way.

FACT: Most of the homeless have become so only in recent years. Since 1980, the homeless population has been growing at a rate of about 25% a year. As a result, homelessness is now a crisis affecting people of all ages in all regions of the country. There are more homeless people in the United States today than at any other time since the Great Depression.

The explosive growth in the numbers of the homeless has changed the overall nature of that population. Unlike the 1960s, "skid row derelicts" no longer comprise the typical homeless population. Instead, today's homeless population has become very diverse -- including families with children, newly unemployed, victims of family breakups, and working poor, as well as the chronically mentally ill and those suffering from various forms of drug abuse.

The increasing number of working poor who are homeless due to the shortage of affordable housing is a particularly striking example of recent changes in the makeup of the homeless population. Contrary to their stereotype, almost one out of five of the homeless are working.

Many of the "new homeless" recently led normal lives -- with jobs, families, and homes -- until a reversal of fortune landed them on the street. Many never expected that such a thing could ever happen to them, and are deeply shamed by the experience. Because of this, the "new homeless" are often less visible than those for whom homelessness has longer been a way of life.

* *

MYTH: The homeless population is made up almost entirely of single adults.

FACT: Families with children account for almost one-third of all the homeless, and are the fastest growing group among the homeless population. In many cities, families with children represent the majority of the homeless. For example, families comprise 76% of the homeless in New York City, 52% in Portland, and 50% in Philadelphia. Their numbers are swollen by factors such as the shrinking supply of affordable housing, lower public assistance benefits, family breakups, and domestic violence.

Despite the growing number of homeless families, local officials often find it very difficult to meet their needs. The U.S. Conference of Mayors reports that families with children are the group most often turned away from temporary shelters, because few of these shelters are designed to handle families. Some city officials report families being forced to sleep in cars and abandoned buildings due to the shortage of appropriate shelters; and some officials report that their cities have no facilities for families, and that families must always be separated in order to be sheltered.

Clearly, homeless families represent a major part of the homeless population, and current programs have been unable to adequately care for them.

* *

MYTH: The vast majority of the homeless are the chronically mentally ill, who for the most part choose to be homeless.

FACT: Recent data show that only 29% of the total number of homeless are mentally ill, although the percentage varies widely from area to area. For example, it is estimated that 45% of the homeless in San Francisco are mentally ill, while only 10% of the homeless in Norfolk, Virginia suffer from mental illness.

The misperception that most of the homeless are mentally ill is probably due to their high visibility. Because of their illness, the mentally ill are less likely to strive to be hidden from public view. Hence, it is difficult to walk the streets of any major American city without encountering an obviously disturbed individual. However, for each such homeless person, there are more than two others without mental health problems.

There is also no evidence that the majority of these mentally ill homeless choose to live this way. Certainly, some do refuse help and apparently choose life on the street. However, experts indicate that the number of mentally ill willing to receive assistance far exceeds the available assistance. For example, one study in Philadelphia showed that greater than 84% of the homeless mentally ill voluntarily agreed to take medication for their conditions.

Mental health systems clearly have not reached out or adapted to meet the needs of the homeless. The assumption that mental health services will be rejected by the homeless has prevented the development of flexible, nonthreatening, and accessible programs targeted at the homeless.

* *

MYTH: State and local governments and charitable organizations have the resources to handle the homeless problem.

FACT: There is extensive evidence that the dramatic increase in homelessness has outrun the ability of local governments and charitable organizations to keep pace with the problem.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors reported last December that 72% of the 25 cities surveyed are routinely turning away homeless people from emergency shelter programs because of a lack of beds or space. The report showed that about one-fourth of the need for emergency shelter is going unmet.

In the same study, 52% of the cities routinely turn away homeless people from emergency feeding programs because of a lack of food. On average, city officials estimate that they cannot meet 23% of the need for emergency food.

The homeless are being turned away despite local shelters' best efforts to keep up with demand. The average city in the survey increased its shelter capacity by 15% last year, yet every one of the cities was having difficulty meeting the increased demand. In some cases, homeless people sleep on the floors of the shelters because of bed shortages. In some cities, such as Phoenix, half of all the homeless seeking emergency shelter cannot be accommodated.

* *

MYTH: Economic growth will solve the homeless problem.

FACT: There seems to be no relation at all between the expanding economy and solving the homeless problem. In fact, it has been precisely during the four-year economic recovery that began in 1983 that the homelessness problem has reached crisis proportions.

In last December's U.S. Conference of Mayors report, many cities commented that there was no correlation between the economic recovery and reducing homelessness. They pointed out that the recovery has done nothing to increase the supply of affordable housing or to provide jobs for the marginally employed or the chronic poor. Specifically, 88% of the cities surveyed said that the economic recovery had not helped the homeless in their cities. Some local officials observed that the recovery simply had widened the gap between rich and poor, and had made it even more difficult to move out of the poverty level.

* *

MYTH: The Federal Government cannot afford to deal with the homeless.

FACT: Even very limited federal funding would have a large impact in helping to ensure that the homeless are sheltered and fed. Modest, achievable proposals can make a very real difference in the lives of the homeless.

The amounts of federal funds that are being discussed to address the homelessness crisis are minimal when compared to the overall size of the federal budget. For example, the $500 million cost of the Democratic Leadership bill (H.R. 558; see Section III) is less than half the cost of one Trident submarine.

None of the proposals before Congress would establish another federal bureaucracy to administer relief programs. The homeless aid legislation introduced in the House funnels additional dollars largely to existing programs being run by charitable organizations and local governments. These programs, often run by volunteers, have already demonstrated that their dollars are used for direct benefits to the homeless. Administrative overhead is kept to a minimum.

Furthermore, federal dollars spent now can avoid higher costs to the Federal Treasury later. For example, initiatives taken now, to prevent the growing number of families and working poor from becoming homeless in the first place, will reduce future public expenditures to help move these people back into mainstream society. Studies have shown that every additional week spent without a home tends to create further dependency, only adding to the ultimate bill paid by American taxpayers. With homelessness getting worse by the month, it makes fiscal sense for the Federal Government to target resources to reverse this trend before the cost in lives and dollars gets still worse.

Finally, providing the minimum needed for survival is one of the core responsibilities of government. Just as the Federal Government has a responsibility to protect the country against foreign attack, it also has a responsibility to assure that everyone can be sheltered and fed, at least at minimum levels. While some government programs should be curtailed or eliminated in the face of budget deficits, giving people a place to sleep at night and food to survive are not "luxury items" in a decent society. The United States, as the world's richest democracy, can surely provide its citizens with the basic requirements for physical survival.

* * *

V. Organizations to Contact

National Nonprofit Organizations

Contact these organizations for further information on hunger and homelessness.

1. **National Low-Income Housing Coalition** is a national organization of low income housing advocates and organizations that support improved low income housing policies. Its educational arm, the Low Income Housing Information Service (LIHIS), publishes a monthly newsletter, the *Low Income Housing Round-Up*, that follows related legislation. NLIHC also sponsors the National Support Center for Low-Income Housing which provides information on state and local housing initiatives.

   For membership and newsletter information, write or call:

   1012 14th Street, NW
   Suite 1006
   Washington, DC 20005
   202/662-1530

2. **National Coalition for the Homeless** is a national advocacy organization committed advocating for decent and humane shelter and permanent housing. Coordinated by a Board of Directors representing approximately 50 cities and regions throughout the United States, the NCH acts on behalf of the homeless through federal litigation, legislative analysis and advocacy, and the mobilization of advocacy groups across the country.

   For a publication list and a copy of the monthly newsletter, *Safety Network*, write or call:

   1439 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
   Washington, DC 20005
   202/265-2371

   105 East 22nd Street
   New York, NY 10010
   212/460-8110

3. **Food Research and Action Center** seeks to enhance public awareness of problems of hunger and poverty.

   For a publications list, including anti-hunger activities, write:

   1319 F Street, NW
   Washington, DC 20004
   202/393-5060

4. **National Mental Health Association** is a citizen advocacy organization concerned with all aspects of mental illness and mental health. Founded in 1909, it has 600 local and state affiliates across the country. NMHA has a three-fold mission: to work for improved services, the prevention of mental illness, and the promotion of mental health.

   For *Homeless People with Mental Illnesses: Action Guidelines* ($0.30), *The Role of Community Foundations in Meeting the Needs of Homeless Individuals with Mental Illnesses* ($1.50), and the *Homeless in America* video (12 minutes, $29.50 plus postage) or book ($19.95 plus postage), write or call:

   1021 Prince Street
   Alexandria, VA 22314
   202/684-7722

5. **Children's Defense Fund** provides advocacy on behalf of poor, minority, and handicapped children. For a free publications list, write or call:

   122 C Street, NW
   Washington, DC 20001
   202/628-8787

6. **Bread for the World** is a Christian citizens' movement which approaches hunger as a public policy issue. BFW is committed to influencing public policy to make government more responsive to the needs of the hungry and to eliminate the causes of hunger.

   For membership information, study guides and publications on organizing networks of "citizen advocates," write or call:

   802 Rhode Island Avenue, NE
   Washington, DC 21218
   202/269-0200

7. **Coalition on Human Needs** represents more than 100 national organizations and over 40 state and local coalitions concerned with poverty issues. For a free brochure, write:

   1000 Wisconsin Ave, NW
   Washington, DC 20007
   202/342-0726

8. **Child Welfare League of America** seeks to improve care and services for deprived, dependent, or neglected children.
   For a copy of the report *Homeless Children and Families*, write or call:

   440 First Street, NW
   Suite 310
   Washington, DC 20001
   202/638-2952

9. **National Volunteer Clearinghouse for the Homeless** maintains a computerized database of more than 5,000 local groups and agencies which provide services for the homeless.

   For a printout of volunteer opportunities in your community, write or telephone toll free:

   1310 Emerson Street, NW
   Washington, DC 20011
   1-800-HELP-664

10. The **Homelessness Information Exchange** is a comprehensive national information service which offers summaries of exemplary programs, policies, research and funding sources. The Exchange offers referrals to experts in the field on all aspects of homelessness. An extensive annotated bibliography of studies, program manuals, professional literature, and other articles is also available.

    For a complete listing of Exchange publications please see the back of this publication. To contact the Exchange write or call:

    Homelessness Information Exchange
    1830 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
    Washington, DC 20009

National Charitable Organizations

These organizations have been traditionally involved in serving those with food and shelter needs. They have administered the Federal Emergency Management Agency since 1983, the only federal food and shelter coordinating body.

Contact state and local chapters of these organizations to identify specific programs in your area.

National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
110 Maryland Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 200002
202/544-2350

Council of Jewish Federations
Washington Action Office
227 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
202/547-0020

American Red Cross
National Headquarters
1730 East Street, NW
2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20006
202/737-8300

Catholic Charities USA
1319 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004
202/639-8400

Salvation Army
1025 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202/639-8414

United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
202/836-7100

Local Grassroots Organizations

1. **Jobs with Peace Campaign,** a national grassroots organization that works to re-direct federal military spending into housing, health care, education, child care and other human needs. Jobs with Peace has ten local chapters that sponsor actions for various national campaigns such as "Build Homes Not Bombs."

   For contacts for local chapters, organizing kits, general and membership information, write or call:

   National Office
   76 Summer Street
   Boston, MA 02110
   617/338-5783

2. **Habitat for Humanity International** is an ecumenical Christian housing organization that works in partnership with people in need to build homes in North America and developing countries. Candidates for Habitat homes participate in the construction of their home and help at least one other family build its home. Habitat's 274 affiliate projects in the United States utilize a wide range of skills and talents.

   For general information and contacts for a project near you, call or write:

   Habitat for Humanity International
   Habitat and Church Streets
   Americus, Georgia 31709
   912/924-6935

3. **Acorn** is a national grassroots organization of low- and moderate-income people organized at the neighborhood level to bring about fundamental social change in conditions that cause poverty and powerlessness. Acorn has affiliates in 40 cities and 29 states. Neighborhood groups sponsor projects, and there are city-wide, state and national campaigns taking place simultaneously.

   For a brochure and contacts for a chapter near you, call or write:

   Mildred Brown, President
   522 Eight Street, SE
   Washington, DC 20003

4. **The Search for Shelter** is a special program of the American Institute of Architects that aids groups in addressing the needs of the homeless of their communities. The Search for Shelter encourages education and action at the local level by fostering broad-based community coalitions of architects, architecture students and educators, homeless service providers, community housing groups, government representatives, and civic, religious and business leaders.

For more detailed information, write or call:

Project Coordinator
The Search for Shelter
The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202/626-7468

Organizations for Students

1. **Campus Outreach Opportunity League** is a national organization designed to promote and support students involved in community action. COOL has established a network of students, staff people and organizations committed to developing strong outreach programs on campus. COOL provides technical assistance, publishes a newsletter, hosts regional and national conferences.

   For membership and newsletter information, write or call:

   National Office
   810 18th Street, N.W.
   Suite 705
   Washington, DC 20006
   202/783-1582

2. **National Student Campaign Against Hunger** is a cooperative venture between 20 state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) and USA for Africa to help students fight hunger by promoting a major event each semester. NSCAH provides technical assistance and serves as a clearing house for new project ideas and activities.

   For general information and a free organizing manual, write:

   29 Temple Place
   Boston, MA 02111
   617/292-4823

• For a student *Resources Guide* from the Student Homeless Action Campaign, see Bibliography (Section VI).

Federal Programs

The Interagency Council on the Homeless
451 7th Street, S.W.
Suite 10158
Washington, DC 20410
202/755-1480

For specific information on programs to assist the homeless write or telephone the Coordinator for the Homeless at the following agencies:

Emergency Shelter, Transitional and Longer Term Housing:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Attn: Coordinator for the Homeless
P.O. Box 280
Germantown, MD 20874-0280
301/251-5154

Federal Emergency Management Agency
5th and C Streets, S.W.
Washington, DC 20472
202/646-3642

Education and Training:

U.S. Department of Education
Compensatory Education Programs
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education
FOB#6, Room 2043 400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-6133
202/732-4682

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
Division of Adult Education
Room 522 400 Mary land Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-7240
202/732-2241

U.S. Department of Labor
N5629 Perkins Building
200 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20210
202/535-0682

Food Assistance:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA - Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Office Center
Alexandria, VA 22302-3000
703/756-3039

Health and Social Services:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

General Information:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HHH Building, Room 457-D
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
202/245-7316

Mental Health and Substance Abuse:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institute of Mental Health
Parklawn Building, Room 11-C-25
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
301/443-3706

Primary Health Care:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Parklawn Building, Room 7-A-42
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
301/443-5295

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Switzer Building, Room 2054
330 C St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
202/475-0430

Runaway and Homeless Youth:

Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Office of Human Development Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Donohoe Building, Room 3030
400 6th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
202/755-7800

Veterans' Programs:

Director, Veterans Assistance Service (27)
Veterans Administration
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Room 344
Washington, DC 20420
202/233-2567

Other:

Director, Procurement and Administrative Services
U.S. Department of Commerce
Herbert C. Hoover Building, Room 6316
Washington, DC 20230
202/377-1200

Director, DoD Homeless Assistance Program
Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20301-8000
202/697-7475

U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., S.W., CE-1
Washington, DC 20585
202/586-9220

U.S. Department of Interior
18th and C Streets., N.W., Room 4342
Washington, DC 20240
202/343-5521

U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th St., S.W., Room 10101
Washington, DC 20590
202/366-9669

ACTION
800 Connecticut, N.W., Room 516,
Washington, DC 20525
202/634-9749

General Services Administration
Federal Property Resources Service
18th and F Streets., N.W.
Washington, DC 20405
202/535-7052

Interagency Low Income
Opportunity Advisory Board
231 Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20500
202/456-6630

United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Room 10146
Washington, DC 20260-0010
202/268-2505

VI. Bibliography

Bibliography

Dass, Ram and Paul Gordon, How Can I Help? Stories and Reflections on Service. (1985) New York: Knopf.

Greer, Nora Richter. The Search for Shelter. (AIA Publication #R562) (1986). American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20006. Available for $15 plus $3 shipping. Call 202/626-7475 for credit card orders, or send a check or money order to AIA Order Department, P.O. Box 753, Waldorf, MD 20601.

Hopper, K. and Hamberg, J. The Making of America's Homeless: From Skid Row to New Poor. Available from Community Service Society of New York, 105 East 22nd St., New York, NY 10010, 212/254-8900.

Maz, Veronica, How to Help the Hungry and Homeless: From Skid Row to New Poor. Available from Community Service Society of New York, 105 East 22nd St., New York, NY 10010, 212/254-8900.

People, January 27, 1986. "I Never Imagined That I'd Be Homeless."

Rivlin, Leanne G. "A New Look at the Homeless." Social Policy, Spring 1986, pp. 3-10.

Ropers, Richard H. "The Rise of the New Urban Homeless." Public Affairs Report, Vol. 26, Nos. 5 and 6, Fall 1985.

Student Homeless Action Campaign. Resources Guide. (1988) Available for $5 from Student Homeless Action Campaign, Dwight Hall, P.O. Box 404A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520, 203/432-2420.

U.S. Conference of Mayors. The Continued Growth of Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty in America's Cities: 1987. Available for $10 from U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1620 Eye St., N.W., Washington, DC 20006, 202/293-7330.

U.S. Conference of Mayors. A Status Report on Homeless Families in America's Cities. (1987) Available for $10 from U.S. Conference of Mayors. (See previous listing.)

U.S. News & World Report, February 29, 1988. "Finally, Hope for The Homeless: Five Approaches that Work."

The Urban and Social Change Review: Special Issue on Homelessness, Vol. 17, No.1, Winter 1984.

The Urban and Social Change Review: Special Issue on Homelessness, Vol. 17, No. 2, Summer 1984.

Werner, Frances E. "On the Streets: Homelessness Causes and Solutions." Clearinghouse Review, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 11-16

Wickenden, Dorothy. "Abandoned Americans." The New Republic, March 18, 1985.

VII. Free Publications

Free Publications

Columbia University Community Services. Working with Homeless People. Available from the National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Health, Policy Research Associates, 262 Delaware Ave., Delmar, NY 12054, 800/444-7415.

Public Technology, Inc. Caring for the Hungry and Homeless: Exemplary Programs (June 1985). Available from the United Way of America, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, 601 North Fairfax Street, Suite 225, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703/683-1166.

U.S. Conference of Mayors. Local Responses to the Needs of Homeless Mentally Ill Persons. (1987) Available from U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1620 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, 202/293-7330.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A Report to the Secretary on the Homeless and Emergency Shelters (May 1984). Available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, Office of Dissemination and Transfer, Room 8132, Washington, DC 20410, 202/755-5600.

U.S. General Accounting Office. Homelessness: A Complex Problem and the Federal Response (1985). Available from US GAO Document Handling and Information Services, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, 202/275-6241.

U.S. House of Representatives. "Homeless Older Americans: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Housing and Consumer Interests of the Select Committee on Aging" (May 2, 1984). Available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402-9325.

U.S. House of Representatives. "Homeless Families: A Neglected Crisis: Sixty-Third Report by the Committee on Government Operations" (October 9, 1986). Available from US GPO.

U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging. "Living Between the Cracks: America's Chronic Homeless" (December 12, 1984). Available from the US GPO.

VIII. Video Materials on Homelessness

Video Materials on Homelessness

"America's New Homeless"
(10 minutes, 1987)
Contact: United Way of America Communications Department
701 N. Fairfax St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/836-7100
or your local United Way agency

This video presents information on the growing number of homeless families in America.

"The Face of the Poor and the Hand of God"
(57 minutes, 1984)
Contact: Ark Interfaith Family Shelter
P.O. Box 30036
7025 N.W. 23rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73140
405/427-6073
Available in 3/4" and VHS.

Made professionally for the Coalition for the Homeless in Seattle, Washington, this video addresses homelessness as a national issue through the theme "Who's to blame and who will pay the cost?" The first half graphically demonstrates the horrible pain of being homeless; the last half is a discussion between municipal officials, religious leaders, and Margaret Heckler, formerly of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Back Wards to Back Streets"
(55 minutes, 1981)
Contact: Filmmakers Library
133 E. 58th St.
New York, NY 10022
($75, rental)

This video examines the inadequate support systems available to the mentally ill upon leaving mental institutions. Alternatives such as jail and the streets are portrayed. Successful as well as failed attempts to integrate former mental patients into society are chronicled, and one patient's return to society is traced.

"Down and Out in America"
(60 minutes, 1986)
Contact: Joseph Fuery Productions
200 W. 86th St., #11A
New York, NY 10024
212/877-7700

This Academy Award winning film examines the human consequences of our government's social policies. It discusses social problems related to employment and housing such as farm foreclosures, the welfare hotels in New York City, the loss of blue collar jobs to Third World countries, and Justiceville, the homeless encampment in Los Angeles.

"Footage Sampler: Homelessness, the Unseen Dimensions"
(21 minutes, 1983)
Contact: Julia Keydel
Homelessness Video Project
131 W. 87th St., #1B
New York, NY 10024
Available in video formats.

This video captures the reactions of Goddard Riverside community members to the proposal to create a storefront assessment center for homeless people. Interviews with homeless people, community members, outreach workers, and the director of the program are included.

"The Richest Poor"
(17 minutes, 1985)
Contact: Daniel Berman
350 E. 13th, Suite 4
New York, NY 10003
212/685-6942
Available in video formats.

This video examines the myths and realities of homelessness through interviews with homeless people, service providers, and those who have not experienced homelessness.

"Homelessness and the Search for Solutions: The St. Francis Residence 1"
(57 minutes, 1984)
Contact: Julia Keydel
Homelessness Videotape Project
131 W. 87th Street, #1B
New York, NY 10024
Available in video formats.

This videotape highlights residents, staff, and special programs at St. Francis Residence in New York City, a residential facility for formerly homeless mentally ill persons. The loss of low-income SROs and the lack of support for patients released from state mental hospitals are presented as major factors leading to homelessness. A short brochure containing supplementary information is included.

"Fragile Ladies"
(25 minutes, 1985)
Contact: Lynne Jackson
89 Luquer St., #4R
Brooklyn, NY 11231
718/596-1573
Available in video formats. Rental fees are negotiable and are donated to the Coalition for the Homeless.

This documentary focuses on the plight of homeless women in New York City and the need for small community-based shelters. Interviews with these women, social workers and government officials offer an insightful look into the reality of homelessness among women.

"Streetwise"
(92 minutes, 1985)
Contact: Samuel Goldwyn Company
10203 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90067
213/552-9731, or 800/421-5743 in California

"If teenagers dream of being on their own, then the adolescents in 'Streetwise' are living a nightmare of independence -- but they won't admit it. Exiled from family life, gathered into a haphazard and resilient community occupying a few tough blocks in downtown Seattle, ... the kids survive as panhandlers, prostitutes, and dealers ... Having witnessed the bravo and hurt of these deracinated children, the filmmakers have fashioned a clear, honest, and seamless study of wounded hearts encased in tough skin. Nominated for a 1984 Academy Award as Best Documentary." -- Film Society of Lincoln Center

"Working With the Homeless: A Video Based Training Experience"
(38 minutes, 1987)
Contact: Center for Communications Media
University of Massachusetts, Boston
Harbor Campus
Boston, MA 02125-3393
617/929-7451
Available on VHS (1 tape and manual = $42.00, or 2 or more tapes and manuals= $28.50 each. Add $2.80 postage/handling for each tape.)

This documentary-style video describes the problems of homeless clients and the operating techniques for shelter facilities. The video highlights current research, the problems of substance abuse, mental illness, and physical disabilities, the role of the shelter in aiding the homeless, and techniques to responding to the conflicts and stresses of shelter work. Filmed in Boston, the video also contains street scenes, interviews with the homeless, discussions among shelter staff, and dramatizations. The video program can be adapted to a variety of training and educational needs and is accompanied by a supplementary manual.

"Just Keep Going"
(25 minutes, 1987)
Contact: Ellen A. Meyers
2051 West Montrose Ave., Apt. #2
Chicago, IL 60618
312/929-0577
Rental/Sale for community organizations and churches is $45/$75; for educational institutions and others, $125/$150.

This video traces the story of a homeless shelter in Chicago and the three women who co-direct it. The film challenges perceptions and stereotypes of the homeless by examining the pressures faced by both staff and residents. The film interweaves scenes from daily shelter life and interviews with the directors to present a realistic picture of shelter living.

Portions of this listing were obtained from the Media Network. For additional information on video materials related to homelessness, contact:

Media Network/Alternative Media Information Center
121 Fulton St., 5th floor
New York, NY 10038
212/619-3455

IX. Publications Available from the Homelessness Information Exchange

Publications Currently Available

Homewords, the quarterly newsletter of the Homelessness Information Exchange, compiles effective national and local programs and resources that address homelessness. Each issue highlights model projects, public and private funding strategies, relevant research, and technical advisors. The programs summarized address a continuum of care including emergency, transitional, permanent, and preventive strategies. Annual subscriptions are $10.

General Information explains the causes of homelessness, population characteristics, misconceptions, federal responses, policy issues, and relevant research. The extensive compilation of materials is useful for public education efforts, public speaking, writing proposals or informing the media. ($10)

Transitional Housing offers an introduction to the concepts of transitional housing and its role as an intermediate step to independent living. It addresses issues in facility development, management and program design, with descriptions of services for families and single adults. References included. ($10)

Family and Child Homelessness summarizes the extent, causes and effects of homelessness among families and children. It includes a general overview, excerpts from a wide selection of reports, emergency and transitional case studies, and a bibliography of references. ($10)

City Initiatives: Comprehensive Planning to Address Homelessness presents a framework for addressing both the service needs of homeless people and the structural problems which contribute to homelessness. It is a guide for state and city offices, local planners, advocates and service providers. The packet focuses on six areas: task forces, assessments, emergency services, transitional housing and support services, permanent housing, and prevention. Eighteen cities' efforts are presented; enclosures describe specific components of 13 model programs. The price is $20; the subsidized rate is $10.**

Helping the Homeless in Your Community Educate, volunteer, advocate for the homeless in your community. This compilation of materials offers a general overview of the homelessness problem, with practical examples of how you can offer your time, skills, or support to homeless individuals and families in your locality. It discusses accepted myths, general education, volunteerism, fundraising, church involvement, and how to build coalitions. ($10)

Coalition Building to Address Homelessness is a compilation of guidelines for developing community-wide coalitions. This document addresses the role of coalitions in assessing community needs and coordinating local efforts related to homelessness. It includes examples and accomplishments of local public and private coalitions. ($6)

(over)

Homewords (yearly subscription)	____ @ $10	____
General Information	____ @ $10	____
Transitional Housing	____ @ $10	____
Family and Child Homelessness	____ @ $10	____
Helping the Homeless in Your Community	____ @ $10	____
Coalition Building	____ @ $10	____
City Initiatives	____ @ $20/$10	____**

Total Enclosed: ____

Please make checks or money orders payable to:

Homelessness Information Exchange
1830 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
4th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Name and Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone Number: _____

**Standard rates are for government offices, foundations, and businesses. Subsidized rates are for local and national nonprofit organizations.

If you know of someone else who would like to know about our publications and/or services, please let us know.

Name and Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone Number: _____